



CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

Lying there, he made swift calculations. The quarry, no longer of use to the builder, was reasonably sure to be abandoned. In all probability some sort of a stone-cutter's shed would be found nearby. It would provide shelter from the fine rain that was falling and from the chill night air. He remembered that O'Dowd, in discussing the erection of Green Fancy the night before, had said that the stone came from a pit two miles away, where a fine quality of granite had been found. Two miles, according to Barnes' quick calculations, would bring the pit close to the northern boundary of the Curtis property and almost directly on a line with the point where he and Sprouse entered the meadow at the beginning of their advance upon Green Fancy. That being the case, they were now quite close to the stake and rider fence separating the Curtis land from that of the farmer on the north.

"Good," he said, more to himself than to her. "I begin to see light. Are you afraid to remain here while I go down there for a look around? I shan't be gone more than a couple of minutes."

"The way I feel at present," she said, jerkily, "I shall never, never from this instant till the hour in which I die, let go of your coat-tails, Mr. Barnes." Suiting the action to the word, her fingers resolutely fastened, not upon the tail of his coat but upon his sturdy arm. "I wouldn't stay here alone for anything in the world."

"Heaven bless you," he exclaimed, suddenly exalted. "And, since you put it that way, I shall always contrive to be within arm's length."

And so, together, they ventured along the edge of the pit until they reached the wagon road at the bottom. As he had expected, there was a ramshackle shed hard by. It was not much of a place, but it was deserted and a safe shelter for the moment.

A workman's bench lay on its side in the middle of the earthen floor. He righted it and drew it over to the boarding. She laid her head against his shoulder and sighed deeply. He kept his eyes glued on the door and listened for the faint ominous sound outside. A long time afterward she stirred.

"Are you cold? You are wet—" "It was the excitement, the nervousness, Mr. Barnes," she said, drawing slightly away from him. "Isn't it nearly daybreak?"

He looked at his watch. "Three o'clock," he said.

There ensued another period of silence. She remained slightly aloof.

"You'd better lean against me," he said at last. "I am softer than the best boards, you know, and quite as harmless."

"Thank you," she said, and promptly settled herself against his shoulder. "It is better," she sighed.

"Would you mind telling me something about yourself, Miss Cameron? I should like to know whether I am to address you as princess, duchess, or—just plain Miss."

"I am more accustomed to plain Miss, Mr. Barnes, than to either of the titles you would give me."

"Don't you feel that I am deserving of a little enlightenment?" he asked. "I am working literally as well as figuratively in the dark. Who are you? Why were you a prisoner at Green Fancy? Where and what is your native land?"

"Mr. Barnes, I cannot answer any one of your questions without jeopardizing a cause that is dearer to me than anything else in all the world. I am sorry. I pray God a day may soon come when I can reveal everything to you—and to the world. I am of a stricken country; I am trying to serve the unhappy house that has ruled it for centuries and is now in the direst peril. The man you know as Loeb is a prince of that house. I may say this to you, and it will serve to explain my position at Green Fancy: he is not the prince I was led to believe awaited me there. He is the cousin of the man I expected to meet, and he is the enemy of the branch of the house that I would serve. Do not ask me to say more."

"Your sympathies are with the entente allies, the prince's are opposed? Is that part of Sprouse's story true?"

"Yes."

"And O'Dowd?"

"O'Dowd is anti-English, Mr. Barnes, if that conveys anything to you. He is not pro-German."

"Wasn't it pretty risky for you to carry the crown jewels around in a traveling bag, Miss Cameron?"

"I suppose so. It turned out, however, that it was the safest, surest way. I had them in my possession for three days before coming to Green Fancy. No one suspected. I was to deliver them to one of their rightful

owners, Mr. Barnes—a loyal prince of the blood."

"But why here?" he insisted.

"He was to take them into Canada, and thence, in good time, to the palace of his ancestors."

"I am to understand, then, that not only you but the committee you speak of, fell into a carefully prepared trap. The treachery, therefore, and its inception in the loyal past. You were betrayed by a friend."

"I am sure of it," she said bitterly. "If this man Sprouse does not succeed in restoring the—oh, I believe I shall kill myself, Mr. Barnes."

The wall of anguish in her voice went straight to his heart.

"He has succeeded, take my word for it. They will be in your hands before many hours have passed."

"Is he to come to the Tavern with them? Or am I to meet him?"

"Good Lord!" he gulped. Here was a contingency he had not considered. Where and when would Sprouse appear with his booty? "I—I fancy we'll find him waiting for us at the Tavern."

"But had you no understanding?"

"Er—tentatively." The perspiration started on his brow. He was thinking of something else: his amazing stupidity in not foreseeing the very situation that now presented itself. Why had he neglected to settle upon a meeting place with Sprouse in the event that circumstances forced them to part company in flight? Fearing that she would pursue the subject, he made haste to branch off onto another line.

"What is the real object of the conspiracy up there, Miss Cameron?"

"You must bear with me a little longer, Mr. Barnes," she said, appealingly. "I cannot say anything now."

"You said that tomorrow night would be too late. What did you mean by that?"

She waited a few seconds and then removed her head from his shoulder. He heard the sharp intake of her breath and felt the convulsive movement of the arm that rested against his. There was no mistaking her sudden agitation.

"I will tell you," she said, and he was surprised by the harshness that came into her voice. "Tomorrow morning was the time set for my marriage to that wretch up there. I could have avoided it only by destroying myself. If you had come tomorrow night instead of tonight you would have found me dead, that is all. Now you understand."

"Good God! You—were to be forced into a marriage with—why, it is the most damnable—"

"O'Dowd—God bless him!—was my only champion. He knew my father. He—"

"Listen!" he hissed, starting to his feet.

"Don't move!" came from the darkness outside. "I have my gun leveled. I heard my name taken in vain. Thanks for the blessing. I was wondering whether you would say something about yourself, Miss Cameron?"

"Thank you," she said, and promptly settled herself against his shoulder. "It is better," she sighed.

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"I am ready to return with you, Mr. O'Dowd," she said distinctly. "There must be no struggle, no bloodshed. Anything but that."

O'Dowd spoke out of the darkness: "You forget that I have your own word for it that you'll be a dead woman before the day is over. Wouldn't it be better for me to begin shooting at once and spare your soul the everlasting torture that would begin immediately after your self-produced decease?"

A little cry of relief greeted this quaint reply. "You have my word that I will return with you quietly if—"

"Thunder!" exclaimed Barnes wrathfully. "What do you think I am? A worm that—"

"Easy, easy, my dear man," cautioned O'Dowd. "Keep your seat. Don't be deceived by my infernal Irish humor. It is my way to be always polite, agreeable and—prompt. I'll shoot in a second if you move one step outside that cabin."

"O'Dowd, you haven't the heart to drag her back to that beast of—"

"Hold hard! We'll come to the point without further palaver. Where are you dragging her yourself, ye rascal?"

"To a place where she will be safe from insult, injury, degradation—"

"Well, I have no fault to find with you for that," said O'Dowd. "Bedad, I didn't believe you had the nerve to tackle the job. You may be interested to know that up to the moment I left the house your absence had not been noticed, my dear Miss Cameron. And as for you, my dear Barnes, your visit is not even suspected. How the devil did you do it, Barnes?"

"Are you disposed to be friendly, O'Dowd?" demanded Barnes. "If you are not, we may just as well fight it out now as later on."

"You are not to fight!" she cried in great agitation. "What are you doing? Put it away! Don't shoot!"

"Is it a gun he is pulling?" inquired O'Dowd calmly. "And what the deuce are you going to aim at, me hearty? I have a bull's-eye lantern with me. From the luxurious seat behind this rock I could spot you in a second. Having said as much I now propose arbitration. Would you mind handing over that tin box in exchange for my polite thanks and a courteous goodbye to both of ye?"

"We have no box of any description, Mr. O'Dowd," cried she triumphantly. "Thank heaven, he got safely away!"

"Do you mean to tell me you came away without the—your belongings, Miss Cameron?" exclaimed O'Dowd.

"They are not with me," she replied. Her grasp on Barnes' arm tightened. "Oh, isn't it splendid? They did not catch him. He—"

"Will you both swear on your sacred honor that ye haven't the jewels in your possession?"

"Unhesitatingly," said Barnes. "I swear, Mr. O'Dowd."

"Then," said he, "I have no time to waste here. I am looking for a tin box. I beg your pardon for disturbing you."

"Oh, Mr. O'Dowd, I shall never forget all that you have—"

"Whist, now! There is one thing I must insist on your forgetting completely: all that has happened in the last five minutes. What I am doing, Mr. Barnes, would be my death sentence if it ever became known."

"It shall never be known through me, O'Dowd," I'd like to shake your hand, old man."

"God bless you, Mr. O'Dowd," said the girl in a low, small voice, singularly suggestive of tears. "Some day I may be in a position to—"

"Don't say it! You'll spoil everything if you let me think you are in my debt. Bedad, don't be so sure I shan't see you again, and soon."

"Tell me how to find Hart's Tavern, old man, I'll—"

"No, Mr. Barnes, I do. You ought to be grateful to me for not stopping you entirely, without asking me to give you a helping hand. Good-by, and God bless you. I'm praying that ye get away safely, Miss Cameron. So long, Barnes. If you were a crow and wanted to roost on that big tree in front of Hart's Tavern, I dare say you'd take the shortest way there by flying as straight as a bullet from the mouth of this pit, following your extremely good-looking nose."

They did not wait for the break of day. Taking O'Dowd's hint, Barnes directed his steps straight out from the mouth of the quarry and pressed confidently onward. In answer to a question she informed him that there were no fewer than twenty-five men in Green Fancy, all of them shrewd, resolute and formidable.

"I cannot, for the life of me, see why they took chances on inviting me to the house, Miss Cameron."

She was silent for a moment, and when she spoke it was with great intensity. "Mr. Barnes, I had your life in my hands all the time you were at Green Fancy. I shudder now when I think of what might have happened. Before you were asked to the house, I was coolly informed that you would not leave it alive if I so much as breathed a word to you concerning my unhappy plight. The first word of an appeal to you would have been the signal for your death. That is what they held over me. When I spoke to you on the couch that night, I—oh, don't you see? Don't you see that I wantonly, cruelly, selfishly risked your life—not my own—when I—"

"There, there, now!" he cried, consolingly, as she put her hands to her face and gave way to sobs.

"Forgive me," she murmured. "I didn't mean to be so silly."

"It helps to cry sometimes," he said lamely.

The first faint signs of day were

struggling out of the night when they stole across the road above Hart's Tavern and made their way through the stable yard to the rear of the house. His one thought was to get her safely inside the Tavern.

The door was locked. He delivered a series of resounding kicks upon its stout face. Revolver in hand, he faced about and waited for the assault of the men who, he was sure, would come plunging around the corner of the building in response to the racket. But there was no attack.

At last there were sounds from within. A key grated in the lock and a bolt was shot. The door flew open. Mr. Clarence Dillingford appeared in the opening, partially dressed, his hair sadly tumbled, his eyes blinking in the light of the lantern he held aloft.

"Well, what the—" Then his gaze alighted on the lady. "For the love of—" began the embarrassed Dillingford. "What the dev— I say, can't you see that I'm not dressed? What the—"

"Give me that lantern," said Barnes, and snatched the article out of the unresisting hand. "Show me the way to Miss Thackeray's room, Dillingford. No time for explanations."

"Well, for the love of—" "I will take you to Miss Thackeray's room," said Barnes, leading her swiftly through the narrow passage. "She

will make you comfortable for the— that is until I am able to secure a room for you. Come on, Dillingford."

Miss Thackeray was awake. Through the closed door she asked what on earth was the matter.

"I have a friend here—a lady. Will you dress as quickly as possible and take her in with you for a little while?"

There was no immediate response from the inside. Then Miss Thackeray observed, quite coldly: "I think I'd like to hear the lady's voice, if you don't mind. I recognize yours perfectly, Mr. Barnes, but I am not in the habit of opening my—"

"I guess I don't need to dress," said Miss Thackeray, and opened her door. "Come in, please. I don't know who you are or what you've been up to, but there are times when women ought to stand together. And what's more, I shan't ask any questions."

She closed the door behind the unexpected guest, and Barnes gave a great sigh of relief.

"Say, Mr. Barnes," said Miss Thackeray, several hours later, coming upon him in the hall. "I guess I'll have to ask you to explain a little. She's a nice, pretty girl, and all that, but she won't open her lips about anything. She says you will do the talking. I'm a good sport, you know, and not especially flinchy, but I'd hate to—"

"How is she? Is she resting? Does she seem—"

"Well, she's stretched out on my bed with my best nightgown, and she seems to be doing as well as could be expected," said Miss Thackeray dryly.

"Has she had coffee and—"

"I am going after it now. It seems that she is in the habit of having it in bed. I wish I had her imagination. It would be great to imagine that all you have to do is to say, 'I think I'll have coffee and rolls and one egg' sent up, and then go on believing your wish would come true. Still, I don't mind. She seems so nice and pathetic, and in trouble, and I—"

"Thank you, Miss Thackeray. If you will see that she has her coffee I'll— I'll wait for you here in the hall and try to explain. I can't tell you everything at present—not without her consent—but what I do tell will be sufficient to make you think you are listening to a chapter of a dime novel."

He had already taken Putnam Jones into his confidence. He saw no other way out of the new and somewhat extraordinary situation.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Be Kind and Patient.

There is more special grace requisite and manifest in watchful perseverance in little kindnesses and habitual patience at home, in absence from conversational disparagement of others, and in resistance to habits of sloth and undue self-indulgence in private life than in the performance of great public duties under the observation of multitudes.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

LESSON FOR JULY 27

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

LESSON TEXT—Phil. 4:10-20.

GOLDEN TEXT—If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—1 John 1:7.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—Psalms 123:1-3; Mal. 3:16; John 17:20, 21; 1 Cor. 12:12; Romans 12:15, 16; 1 John 4:7-13.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Loving Jesus and one another (Acts 13:12-15; John 13:24).

JUNIOR TOPIC—Keeping company with God's people (Acts 2:37-47).

INTERMEDIATE TOPIC—Our Christian friendships (John 15:12-15).

SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—Basis and benefits of Christian fellowship.

The Epistle to the Philippians furnishes us with a beautiful example of fellowship between Paul and the church at Philippi. This church on several occasions sent Paul money for his support. The particular ministry of this sort at the hands of Epaphroditus while Paul was a prisoner at Rome was the occasion for this epistle. His words of thanksgiving for this gift is the text of our lesson.

I. Paul's Expression of Appreciation (4:10).

The Philippians had on several occasions expressed their sympathy and love for Paul by their gifts, but considerable time had elapsed since any gift had reached him. When their care for him again flourished he was made to greatly rejoice. He recognized that the Lord was ministering to him through these people, therefore he rejoiced in the Lord. This was a very tactful way of saying "I thank you."

This gift was gladly received because he was in need and also because it assured him that his old friends still loved him.

II. Paul's Manly Independence (vv. 11-13).

Though sincerely appreciating the gift, he would have them know:

1. He was independent of circumstances (v. 11). Through discipline of the Lord he had learned to be content with his lot. He knew that all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28).

2. He was willing to take what God sent (v. 12). If it be prosperity, he would rejoice and praise God; if it be adversity, he would patiently suffer it, knowing that it was permitted by the Heavenly Father because it was needful for his best interests. This is a fine example of self-mastery. If a thing desired was not forthcoming he would not allow his heart to desire it.

3. His faith was in Christ (v. 13). The soul-poise which Paul possessed was not of himself, but because Christ indwelt him. Such composure is only possible as Christ lives in and becomes the dynamic of one's life. When the life is thus surcharged with the energy of Christ, he is absolutely independent of circumstances. Such poise is possible to all who will unreservedly yield themselves to God.

III. The Fellowship of Paul and the Philippians (vv. 14-19).

1. The gift of this church to Paul is an outstanding example of Christian sympathy (vv. 14-16). No other church had remembered Paul at all in his great need, but this one rendered pecuniary aid again and again, affording a fine example of mutual love between a minister and the people supporting him.

2. The gift a spiritual blessing to the church (v. 17). Paul was pleased with their gift not primarily for its value to him, but because of the blessing which the people derived from giving it. It was fruit which abounded to their account. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

3. Their gift was an acceptable act of worship—"an odor of a sweet smell, well-pleasing to God" (v. 18). True Christian giving is an act of worship to God.

4. Their gift would be rewarded by the Heavenly Father (v. 19). True Christian giving is not on the basis of prudence, but by faith in the living God who will make recompense according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Within God's Keeping.

He that takes himself out of God's hands into his own by and by will know what to do with himself.—Benjamin Whichcote.

Face of the Master.